Message from the ESPON Coordination Unit

2002–2012: Ten Years of ESPON

Throughout 2012, ESPON will celebrate 10 years of operation. This anniversary makes it obvious to highlight the support to policy development related to EU Cohesion Policy that has been achieved. ESPON has over the years provided comparable pan-European evidence, analyses and scenarios on territorial dynamics and built up a knowledge and evidence base that help regions, cities and larger territories in deciding on their development.

The demand for European territorial evidence was first voiced in 1992. This demand was taken up by EU Member States when approving the “European Spatial Development Perspective” in 1999. The European Commission supported testing the idea of a European Observatory on Territorial development which was a crucial step. The test was deemed positive and later led to the first ESPON 2006 Programme, starting in 2002.

Policy makers considered the deliveries of ESPON satisfying, and in 2007, the European Commission adopted the ESPON 2013 Programme with a substantially increased budget of €47 million for 2007-2013. ESPON had now 31 participating countries and the European Commission behind.

The European policy arena developed, and territorial cohesion became an objective for the EU. The territorial dimension is now included in the draft legislative pack for future Structural Funds currently in negotiation. The integrated policy thinking is even more visible, and the strong request is on delivery of results based on evidence contributing to the EU 2020 strategy, to growth and job creation.

As stated by the EU Commissioner for Regional Policy Johannes Hahn: “One of the main objectives of the future Cohesion Policy is to have a more result-orientated policy, to have a focus on thematic priorities. We need to offer the tailor-made ESPON knowledge to the EU regions preparing their operational programmes.”

Altogether, European policy development creates demand for ESPON that today have developed into an recognized provider of territorial evidence covering information and tools related to structures, trends, scenarios and policy impact issues. The possibility for regions and cities to benchmark themselves in the European context and see new development opportunities or challenges is now a reality. Ministers meeting during the Hungarian and Polish EU Presidencies in 2011 recognized ESPON’s ability to create useful pan-European territorial knowledge, and thus encouraged the ongoing process to prepare the continuation of ESPON post 2013.

Looking back on the progress achieved in the past ten years, credits have to be given to visionary people around Europe, to policy makers and stakeholders that have believed in and used ESPON, to the ESPON Contact Points, and in particular to the researchers and experts from all over Europe that are the key intellectual force providing the new and often innovative results that the ESPON applied research and analyses have resulted in. An appetizer of one of the recent innovative achievements is the evidence provided on the regional exposure, adaptive capacity and vulnerability of climate change, presented below.

ESPON will in 2012 mark its 10th Anniversary in different ways. Look forward to meeting you at one of our upcoming events.

Peter Mehlbye, Director ESPON Coordination Unit
Map of the Month “Climate change may hamper territorial cohesion”

Climate change may deepen existing socio-economic imbalances between the central and northern parts of Europe and its southern parts. In this respect, Europe’s vulnerability to climate change seems to run counter to territorial cohesion.

This month ESPON presents three maps giving climate change a territorial dimension. The first shows the potential impacts across European regions, balancing the exposure and the sensitivity of each region. The second map shows the capacity of regions to adapt to these impacts. Overlaying these two maps creates a pattern of regional vulnerability within Europe, displayed by the third map.

The potential impacts of climate change vary considerably across Europe. Particularly negatively affected regions are primarily found in the South of Europe – e.g. the big agglomerations and the summer tourist resorts along the coasts. Many mountain areas and coasts in other parts of Europe are also highly impacted, but for other reasons such as coastal storm surges, economic dependency on winter and/or summer tourism. Many central, eastern and northern European regions face virtually no negative impacts or are even witnessing positive potential impacts of climate change.

The adaptive capacity of Europe’s regions shows a similar, yet inverted pattern. Northern and central European regions have a higher capacity to adapt to climate change than regions in eastern and southern European countries. Generally, though, regions with concentrations of population, economic and research activities have higher adaptive capacities than more rural regions.

The map showing the potential vulnerability to climate change in Europe seems to mirror the territorial pattern of potential impacts, but with an even more pronounced South-North imbalance. This is due to the high adaptive capacity in Scandinavian and Western European regions, which compensates for the potential
impacts projected for these regions. However, in the Mediterranean region and in South-East Europe, where medium to high negative impacts are to be expected, the ability to adapt to climate change is generally lower thus resulting in medium to high levels of vulnerability. Read more and download maps and data at the ESPON Website.

New Reports
The Final Report of TrasSMEC (Transnational Support Method for European Cooperation), the Interim Reports of EATIA (ESPON and Territorial Impact Assessment), ESaTDOR (European Seas and Territorial Development, Opportunities and Risks), POLYCE (Metropolisation and Polycentric Development in Central Europe: Evidence Based Strategic Options), RISE (Identifying and Exchanging Best Practices in Developing Regional Integrated Strategies in Europe), TPM (Territorial Performance Monitoring), the Inception Report of ULYSSES (Using applied research results from ESPON as a yardstick for cross-border spatial development planning) are online at the ESPON website.

Call for Tenders
The Call for Tenders "ESPON Data Navigator 2012" is open. Deadline for accessing the documentation is 17/02/2012. More

Overview of ESPON activities in 2012
Expected key events of the year (follow the ESPON website for the final dates):
- **ESPON Monitoring Committee Meeting** Location: Brussels, Date: 8 February 2012
- **Workshop “Territorial Impact Assessment”** A workshop is being scheduled for April 2012 on “Territorial Impact Assessment”, organised in cooperation with the ESPON projects ARTS and EATIA. This workshop will aim to make policymakers and practitioners aware of the usefulness and ease of accessibility of the TIA tools resulting from these projects. It will offer policymakers and practitioners a ‘hands-on’ practical experience of being actively engaged in a top-down and bottom-up TIA exercises and they will be able to see the results of this process ‘live’. Location: Brussels, Date: April
- **Financial Managers Seminar** Date: Spring
- **Calls for Proposals** Opening: 18 April 2012, Info Day on 10 May in Brussels. Closure: 13 June 2012
- **ESPON Monitoring Committee Meeting** Location: Aalborg, DK. Date: 11-12 June 2012
- **Open Seminar** Location: Aalborg, DK. Date: 13-14 June 2012
- **ESPON Contact Point Network Meeting** Location: Aalborg, DK. Date: 15 June 2012
- **ESPON Monitoring Committee Meeting** Location: Brussels. Date: 19 September 2012
- **Workshop “Innovation and Knowledge”** Location: Brussels. Date: September
- **ESPON at the Open Days** Location: Brussels. Date: 8-11 October 2012
- **ESPON European Conference** Location: Brussels. Date: October 2012
- **GoA Meeting** Date: 12-13 November 2012
- **Financial Managers Seminar** Date: Autumn
- **ESPON Scientific Seminar** Location: Luxembourg. Date: November 2012
- **ESPON Monitoring Committee Meeting** Location: Pafos, Cyprus. Date: 3-4 December 2012
− **Internal Seminar**  *Location: Pafos, Cyprus. Date: 5-6 December 2012*
− **ESPON Contact Point Network Meeting**  *Location: Pafos, Cyprus. Date: 7 December 2012*
− **Publications**  
  (1) Territorial Observation N.6 “Global Comparison”, March 2012;  
  (2) Territorial Observation N.7 “Hazards and Climate”, December 2012

**ESPON at Events**

**ESPON at the ERSA Congress 2012 “Regions in Motion - Breaking the path”, 21-25 August 2012, Bratislava, Slovakia**

This year the ESPON 2013 Programme contributes to the ERSA Congress by the attendance of several of its applied research projects. The themes that will be covered by the ESPON projects are: innovation, attractiveness, green economy, territorial cooperation, rural areas, land use patterns, accessibility, services of general interest and the role of European seas in territorial development.

ERSA ([www.ersa.org](http://www.ersa.org)) is one of three supra-national organizations within the Regional Science Organization International (RSAI) and has more than 3,500 members from all over Europe. Each year, ERSA organizes a European congress late in August. This is the largest meeting for regional scientists in the world with more than 1,000 registered participants in recent years. More: [http://www.ersa.org/ersa-congress/](http://www.ersa.org/ersa-congress/)

**ESPON Contact Point Network**

− **ESPON-INTERSTRAT UK Conference Report**
  The conference report from the UK’s INTERSTRAT event on ‘Planning for Growth – what can we learn from Europe?’ is available online ([http://www.rtpi.org.uk/item/4735](http://www.rtpi.org.uk/item/4735))

− **The First ESPON Synthesis Report has been translated in French**
  The translation resulted from a pedagogical translation project: the text was translated by the students of the University Paris 7 Paris Diderot, Master in specialized translation, with the support of professors and of an independent translator. This has been possible through a collaboration between UMS RIATE (French ECP) and the translator that coordinated the pedagogical project. Link [http://www.ums-riate.fr/documents/synthesis_report_espon.pdf](http://www.ums-riate.fr/documents/synthesis_report_espon.pdf)

− **NORBA Scientific Conference “Nordic and Baltic Regions in a European Development and Policy Context”, 14 and 15 March 2012 in Oslo, Norway**

**News from URBACT**

**3rd URBACT Call for Proposals for the Creation of Thematic Networks**
The 3rd and last URBACT Call for Proposals is now open for the creation of up to 19 new Thematic Networks. The Call is open from 9th December 2011 until 15th March 2012.

**News from the Alpine Space Programme**

An interesting report on pooling potential on competitiveness is available at the Alpine Space Programme website. This report represents a contribution towards translating the overall objective of the EU 2020 Strategy into pragmatic regional strategies potentials. [More](#)
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More information

The ESPON 2013 Programme is part-financed by the European Regional Development Fund, the EU Member States and the Partner States Iceland, Liechtenstein, Norway and Switzerland.

It shall support policy development in relation to the aim of territorial cohesion and a harmonious development of the European territory. ESPON shall support Cohesion Policy development with European wide, comparable information, evidence, analyses and scenarios on framework conditions for the development of regions, cities and larger territories. In doing so, it shall facilitate the mobilisation of territorial capital and development opportunities, contributing to improving European competitiveness, to the widening and deepening of European territorial cooperation and to a sustainable and balanced development.

The Managing Authority responsible for the ESPON 2013 Programme is the Ministry of Sustainable Development and Infrastructures, Department for Spatial Planning and Development of Luxembourg. More information: www.espon.eu

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